INTERVIEW WITH MR. CLARENCE M. BOULTON

April 13, 1976

Conducted by:

Dr. James L. Dodson

--and--

Miss Kathryn Burmeister

Dodson: I wonder Mr. Boulton whether you would state your full name for our record and tell us how long you have lived here in the valley.

Boulton: Clarence Mason Boulton. I've lived in the Valley forty years.

Dodson: How many did you say, Mr. Boulton?

Boulton: Forty.

Dodson: Forty. Then could you tell us something about your education in the Valley? Did you come here as a young person?

Boulton: I had my schooling before I came west, in Indiana and Ohio. Of course I took a few night classes here like animal husbandry and poultry and things like that because we were raising some of those things at the time.

Dodson: Oh, can you tell us then what you did raise when you came to the Valley?

Boulton: Well, we lived over on Vanowen, we had a commercial acre there. We raised rabbits and chickens and a garden truck and part of the time we had a cow. Another time we had a milk goat and then we finally got rid of those and I thought I'd make a little extra money and raise some pigs, so we had some pigs for awhile but they weren't very profitable. [Laughs] I made about enough out of it to pay the feed bill.

Dodson: Was that typical of the way the Valley was when you came here? Was it full of small farms?

Boulton: Well yes, just up the street a couple lots from me there was another fellow. He was raising hogs and he had cows and he had some cattle he was raising for beef.

Dodson: About what year was that Mr. Boulton?

Boulton: Well, that would have been, see we left there in '57, came here, so that would have probably been about ten years before that.

Dodson: Is that area now completely grown up with houses?

Boulton: Where we lived, they have a medical building on that property and then just across the street from us, which was vacant property when we moved there, now is the Presbyterian Hospital. In fact, we used to graze our cow on that land where the hospital is.

Dodson: I see. You didn't come to the Valley when you were a teenager. You came after that didn't you?

Boulton: Yeah. Yeah, well, I was roughly around thirty.

Dodson: Around thirty. We had some questions about what the teenagers did and what they liked at the time. While you weren't a teenager, do you have any recollections of how they might differ now from then, or any personal opinions?

Boulton: We had four boys and we had quite a few relatives who had children that we knew about. Well, let's see, what I have written down here is that we had picture shows at the time. They were interested in that. And they were interested in several types of games like ball, and well, ball mainly, and dancing. Quite a few of them worked in the churches, social activities at the churches.

Dodson: Do you think there is any difference between their interests now and when you first came to the Valley?

Boulton: Well, I'm sorry to say so. I'll have to say yes.

Dodson: What would the differences be in your opinion?

Boulton: Well, it's a little bit hard, but of course there seems to be more things that take up their time than we had during those years. And then, there are so many things that we wish they didn't have to contend with these days, such as dope and all that sort of thing so it's made a terrible difference.

Dodson: I think that's probably true because most people have mentioned that and I know that when I was in college there was never anything like that so I'd say that there has been a change.

Boulton: Yeah, it's really bad. I don't have to tell you folks that, you know that already.

Dodson: We've put a little question down here about religious life in the Valley. Do you see any changes there?

Boulton: Well, I do in many of the churches. Now the Baptist church, they're going strong. They're running a wonderful program apparently. I'm a Methodist so I don't get over there much. I visit once in a while but it seems like the smaller churches, our church included, we've gone downhill for several years now. One time, about fifteen years ago, we had eighteen hundred enrollment in our church. Now we're down to about between seven and eight hundred and our Sunday school classes for a while there were practically nil. The young people, they just weren't coming.

Dodson: Well, would you say then that there is less interest in the churches now than when you first came to the Valley?

Boulton: Well, judging from the congregation, yes. Yes, we don't have the crowds that we used to have.

Dodson: Do you think that that might be due to more opportunites for more types of activities on Sunday?

Boulton: I think that plays a large part, yes.

Dodson: When you first came to the Valley, what sort of work did you plan to go into?

Boulton: Well, when I came I was looking for anything I could find and I was fortunate that I had a Christian friend who spoke a word for me with one of the foremen of the Board of Education in the carpenter division and he put me to work. Well, no I guess you didn't want that here, but that happened down in L.A. where

Where I was supposed to work and, of course, I stayed on for thirty-seven years.

Dodson: I see. So you really hadn't come specifically to the Valley to do some kind of work here?

Boulton: No, no, we were just interested in the Valley. It was such a beautiful place, to us anyway, so first opportunity we had we moved over.

Dodson: I see. I imagine it must have looked something like a rural area when you first came here.

Boulton: Oh, very much so. There was just lots of farming all around this area, in fact, west mainly, lots of truck gardens out through there and there's still some.

Dodson: Would you mention some of the things that were being raised in the Valley when you came?

Boulton: Well, they were raising tomatoes, cabbages and lettuce, just ordinary garden truck. I think the bigger part of the vegetable crops may have been the tomato crops and they raised a lot of squash too. Hubbard squash, Pie squash, you know.

Dodson: You came in after the day they were raising wheat in the southern part of the Valley.

Boulton: Yeah. Yes, I don't remember seeing any wheat here at all.

Dodson: Well, that was an experiment with the Lankershim

family I think because most people would've thought that wheat wouldn't grow in this area but for a while a least we did have wheat fields.

Boulton: Yeah, I would think that it would grow because they've raised barley here as I've known about. They seemed to have nice crops. Barley and wheat are very much alike.

Dodson: Could you tell us anything about historic events that you have witnessed since you came to the Valley and how the Valley reacted to them?

Boulton: Well, lets see. . "Could you tell us about any extraordinary events you have witnessed as a resident of the Valley and how the Valley reacted?" . . Well, anything of that type, of that nature, the just remarkable way the people would get in and lend a hand to help out, to try to promote something different than we'd been having.

Dodson: You were living in the Valley when World War II broke out weren't you? At the time of Pearl Harbor?

Boulton: Yeah, yes.

Dodson: Do you remember the reaction to Pearl Harbor? That would have been 1941.

Boulton: Well, I don't just recall what the reaction was particularily but any time we've ever had something like that come up people got right in and did their part. They were interested in what was happening and at the time we were gonna

have a National Guard here in the Valley and several of us joined up with that group but for some reason or another we never could get it through. We did a lot of work on it. We got out and did a lot of hill climbing, crawling under brush and all that but finally we had to give it up because the government didn't want to honor us I guess.

Dodson: Your unit was never activated then and put in the regular army?

Boulton: No, no. We got a sample of what we'd be doing.

Dodson: I think the existing National Guard units were called into the Federal Service but then yours was a replacement for the existing one?

Boulton: Well, I really don't know how it got started. Somebody asked me if I'd be interested in joining the group and I said "yes" and that's about the way we got started. I don't know who the promoter was now.

Dodson: I see. So you spent most of your time training then but not doing anything else.

Boulton: No, no, that was about all. The thing that stands upper most in my mind is they took us out here in the hills someplace and we climbed over hills, up and down, all under the brush. [laughter]

Burmeister: That would be hard to forget.

Boulton: Oh, yes it was pretty rugged for me at that time.

I was much younger than I am now. I just couldn't do it now.

Dodson: They were getting you ready to be mountain troops I guess.

Boulton: Apparently so.

Dodson: That reminds me of the fact that when I was in Texas some of my colleagues were drafted into the army and sent into the ski troops they never had even seen snow up until that time.

Boulton: [laughing] That's pretty funny.

Dodson: There used to be a feeling that the army would first find out what you could do and then assign you to anything else at all.

Boulton: [laughing] Yeah, I heard so much about that through the years. They'd give you some position and you hadn't had any idea about the workings of it.

Dodson: Well they figured if you were in a job you knew nothing about you couldn't insist on doing it your way.

Boulton: [laughing] Well, ha ha, that's a good point.

Dodson: Well, one historic event that happened when you lived in the valley was the Sylmar earthquake in 1971 I believe.

Boulton: Yes, yes.

Dodson: Do you recall that?

Boulton: Yes, very vividly. We have twin beds and I happened to be laying on my back lookin at the ceiling when the quake hit. I suppose it was around six or seven in the morning, I don't remember definately. But I thought the house was gonna fall down, that was really all I thought. Boy it was just going like this. . but then it stopped and quited down and that same day I began looking around to see what damage I had and you know I couldn't find a plaster crack.

Dodson: You really had no damage at all at your house.

Boulton: No. The only thing that happened was we had some stemmed glasses over in that closet there and they stayed on the shelf and down below we had some table boards stored in there and they were thrown out here on the floor. Now I couldn't explain why the glasses would stay in there and the boards come out in the room. [chuckles] I think we only lost half a dozen dishes or something like that. Something fell out of that corner cubbard over there. You just can't understand those things.

Dodson: No. You were a little further south than the epicenter of the quake. The extensive damage was further north here in San Fernando and Sylmar. And then I understand that in the real southern part of the Valley in Sherman Oaks that no real damage of any kind occurred. It had very little effect over there.

Boulton: Sometime after the quake some of my family and myself took a ride out to Sylmar and I saw new houses that had been under constructiom , they hadn't enclosed them yet, and the roof was on and they were just studding, and it just knocked that studding from right under the roof and the roof came down in one piece.

Dodson: Did you go past any of the hospitals that were collapsed, I think two of them?

Boulton: Uh, we saw one that was pretty badly damaged but I don't remember seeing one that was that bad.

Dodson: I'm not quite sure but the Veterans hospital was one wasn't it?

Boulton: Yeah, yeah.

Dodson: And then Olive View sanitarium, weren't those the two?

Boulton: Yeah, yeah. We didn't see Olive View, we saw the other one. It was askew and parts of it falled down. They're rebuilding of course. It was a terrible sight to see.

Dodson: How long after the quake was that that you drove out that way?

Boulton: Oh, I think about a month.

Dodson: I see, so some of the damage had probably been cleared away by then.

Boulton: Probably.

Dodson: I think that that quake knocked down the only freeway bridge that had ever been destroyed in a quake. Did you happen to see that?

Boulton: No, I didn't see it but I heard something about it. I think that was, it might have been another bridge that was, that I remember something about. See, they had the traffic lanes lined on the highway and they were lined on across the bridge. Well, naturally when they were first done they lined up but after the quake they shifted sideways. The bridge had moved sideways and the lines didn't match.

Dodson: One of the most amazing things I heard was that the mountains out here went up about three feet as a result of the quake. They're about three feet higher now than they used to be.

Boulton: I believe, I believe that I heard something about that too in an announcement there.

Dodson: Well, can you think of something else that has happened here since you've been living here that you regard with having some great importance?

Boulton: Well, yes uh, let's see, what I have written down there. Well, here's an item. I guess I would hold that for a little later. . . Well, I could bring it in now. Well, much better buildings were constructed throughout the Valley and landscaping was just beautiful. Those two things I felt were quite important. It seems there was another item similar to that, I don't see it now.

Dodson: Well, I had wondered about the depression, the great depression of 1929, but you weren't here then?

Boulton: Not in the Valley.

Dodson: You weren't in the Valley.

Boulton: No, no, not in the Valley.

Dodson: You were still in Indiana, or?

Boulton: Well, we came to L.A. in 1913.

Dodson: Oh, I see.

Boulton: I was headed for Long Beach. I was out in Long Beach.

Dodson: I didn't realize that you had come to Los Angeles county at least that early.

Boulton: Yeah, 1913. We left Ohio right after the big flood. You may have heard of that. We lived in Middletown, Ohio that's between Cincinnati and Dayton along the Miami river, course we lived out far enough on high ground so we weren't disturbed but some of our friends we helped clean up their houses and in one house I remember the waterline on the wall was over my head. The day the flood was happening that was the worst part of the flood. I was working for American [....?....] at the time and three or four of us decided we had been hearing all morning about this flood condition so thought

we'd better go down and see what's going on. We got down towards town as close as we could get towards the water and we saw them taking people off porch roofs into boats and things of that sort.

Dodson: I hadn't realized that you were in Los Angeles as early as you were. You probably have some recollections of the effect of the depression that began in 1929. I'm rather curious to hear how it seemed to affect the city as you remember it.

Boulton: Well, I don't know that I can give you a good answer on that. As far as my family was personally concerned we had no problem. I had employment and we were getting along very well. Course I know that many, many people weren't getting along very well. It was a terrible time to get by.

Dodson: I imagine the answer for Los Angeles would be about the same as for this Valley.

Boulton: I'm sure it would be. I think so too.

Dodson: Was there much industry though in the Valley that would have been affected or was it still so much agricultural that it wouldn't get it as hard as Los Angeles?

Boulton: It was pretty much agriculture at that time. It wouldn't have been affected to the extent that L.A. was.

Dodson: Do you recall bread lines or anything like that?

Boulton: No, I didn't happen to meet up with any of those.

Dodson: I think they existed in some parts of the country and I wasn't sure whether or not they did out here.

Boulton: I don't remember. Do you John? Do you remember?

John: No, I don't either.

Boulton: No, I don't remember at all but speaking of soup lines, I'll just interject this: I was down in L.A. at one time and it was noon so I stopped to get my lunch and so I stopped in a restaurant on Main street and got a good hearty lunch for twenty cents. [chuckling]

Dodson: Of course, on the other hand, wages were low in those days too, weren't they?

Boulton: Wages were very poor, compared to now especially.

Dodson: The only way you can evaluate that though is to figure how long you had to work for twenty cents in order to get it and compare that to how long you'd have to work for a couple of dollars here to buy a lunch at our prices. That's the only way you can tell whether it was cheaper or more expensive.

Boulton: Before I became connected with the city schools I worked with Pacific Electric for about a year and a half or two years. I was conductor [ha, ha] and uh, now what was I gonna tell you about that?

Dodson: I imagine you were going to tell us something about the wages they paid.

Boulton: Oh, yes! That was what I had in mind. I worked what they called the [....?...] board you know. Well, the conductors or motormen they had to go through the same routine and I remember we got paid every two weeks. Several paydays I'd have about fifteen dollars for two weeks.

Dodson: Course you were working extra board and that meant you were only a substitute for when somebody else wasn't working.

Boulton: That was the only work I had you know I had to get a run or a trailer when that party was off.

Dodson: Everyone I've talked to regrets the disappearance of the P.E., How do you feel about that?

Boulton: Oh, I think that was a terrible mistake. We'd be so much better off if we'd had that. Used to have cars runnin through Van Nuys here went out to San Fernando. Another one out to Sherman Way went out to Canoga Park. That pretty well took care of the Valley at that time. I know at times I used to ride from the office downtown out here to one of these schools on the red cars. I think the round-trip at that time was about seventy five cents.

Dodson: It probably was. Did you enjoy working for them, for the P.E.?

Boulton: No, that wasn't my line. I just didn't like it.

Dodson: So you liked to ride on the cars but you didn't like to work on them? [chuckles]

Boulton: Yes, yes I like that part of it. That was fine. The type of work was not for me. Course my work being on the extra board was night work which I detest. I've had night jobs two or three different times. One I had in a paper mill in the mid-west. We worked tweleve hours a night and every other week we'd change shifts you know, night to day or day to night, you never could get used to it.

Dodson: Well, you were in California then when World War I broke out too? Do you have any particular recollections of that in Los Angeles that have stuck with you?

Boulton: No, I don't believe I do. I can't think of any at all.

Dodson: I imagine there was a rather riotous armistace celebration wasn't there?

Boulton: Well yes. People were certainly glad the thing was over with. They certainly were celebrating.

Dodson: Do you think there was any difference in attitude towards our participation in World War I over World War II? Did the people seem to act differently?

Boulton: Well, uh I can't remember that there was, they were very similar.

Dodson: I didn't know whether you thought there had been more enthusiasm for one over the other or anything like that.

Boulton: Well, I wouln't, I would kinda doubt that although I don't really know.

Dodson: Well do think of a something else in that a period of a historic nature that you'd like to mention.

Boulton: Well, we talked about hospitals did we? Did we or didn't we?

Dodson: No, you just mentioned that you knew the place where the Presbyterian was located.

Boulton: Well, I think that was one of our outstanding advancements in the Valley is been many hospitals constructed since we were here, and the service you get is just great. I might want to include along with that our city schools. Just as many schools after schools built in this valley, course it's all over the system, but this valley certainly got its share of schools which I think is great.

Dodson: Sometimes we hear critisms of our California schools, that their not as good as somewhere else or something of the kind. How do you feel about that?

Boulton: Well, I don't see why not. I don't agree with em. I think all school systems, they

may have their ups and downs for one reason or another, by and large I think they're doing well and doing fine.

Dodson: I think the critism is usually that some of our students don't seem to score high enough on tests on reading and arithmatic and that sort of thing as schools in other states.

Boulton: Well, I suppose some schools do grade closer than others but that's to the advantage of the individual if they'd just realize it.

Dodson: Do you think part of it might be due to the great influx of people that we have from other areas that we have trouble keeping up with?

Boulton: Well, it might have something to do with it. I can't think why it wouldn't have. Probably it has some.

Dodson: Well, lets turn to something else. I uh, suggest that you tell us something about the changes you've seen in the Valley during your lifetime.

Boulton: Well, I said already about the better buildings and the beautiful landscaping and under fashions I have uh, more attractiveness for folks.

Dodson: You feel that modern fashions are more attractive than those that existed when you first came here?

Boulton: Well, to me I don't think that I would agree with that but I think that for the younger ones that have come on after I think that they would feel just the opposite of what I feel.

Kathryn: So you're saying that they used to be attractive when you first came here and since they've declined?

Boulton: Well, it was farming country was what it amounted to really and those that liked farming wouldn't be very much interested in, I'm a country boy by heart even yet. I was born on the farm and yeah, I loved it when I was there and I love the things about the farm and yet I don't know that I'd want to get, pardon me, way out in the country again like I was when I was a boy.

Dodson: Do you think that the fashions in womens clothes particularily were more attractive then then they are now?

Boulton: No, no. Definitly no.

Dodson: You prefer those now?

Boulton: Some of the fashions now I wouldn't go for but some of them I think are beautiful.

Dodson: In the case of men, I don't think their fashions have changed as radically.

Boulton: No, not so much.

There have been very minor changes like the lapel on our coats. I've got several good suits with a narrow lapel and I'm not about to throw them away.

Dodson: No, I think for mens clothes all you have to do is keep them when you buy them and when they go out of style just keep them and wait another five years and they'll be back in again. It's just going back and forth.

Boulton: I have a double-breasted suit that I've had for I don't know how many years waiting to come back into style. [chuckles]

Dodson: That's about all you can do. In one period it's single breasted and in another period it's double-breasted so you buy two suits and alternate them back and forth so you're always in style.

Boulton: Then we'd all get supplied with a narrow lapel and they'd come out with a wide one.

Dodson: That's why I usually ask about womens fashions because they do change whereas mens fashions don't change, or not anything to the degree at least. Would you agree with that Miss Burmeister?

Kathryn: I think so.

Dodson: I was hoping I'd get more of a response from her than that.

Boulton: You know, one thing on that, nurses clothing. You see them wearing these suits now. I think that's just great.

Kathryn: You like that?

Boulton: Yes. I think that's just great. Then you see people with the white pantsuits on the streets and on most people I think they look very good.

Dodson: What do you remember about fads in the Valley? Do you recall anything about fads in the past that you think should be mentioned or now in contrast?

Boulton: I looked at that quite a bit and I couldn't figure out what I should say.

Kathryn: You know, anything like phonebooth stuffing or goldfish eatting, any particular fads like that that were popular here, something like that.

Boulton: Well, pardon me but would you repeat the first part of that again?

Kathryn: Well, they used to have fads, I don't remember when, probably Dr. Dodson would, where they would stuff a bunch of people in a phone booth or they'd eat goldfish, or something like that.

Boulton: I remember when that was happening but we've gotten over that, thank goodness.

Kathryn: Did the Valley have any little silly things like that?

Boulton: Well, yes. I remember hearing about it but I never actually saw it going on but I remember hearing about them swallowing goldfish. [laughs]

Dodson: And then there was one where they tried to see how many people could crowd into a telephone booth for awhile and all that.

Boulton: Certainly. I don't remember hearing that one.

Kathryn: Ten or tweleve people?

Dodson: Oh no, twenty seven or twenty-eight.

Kathryn: Really?

Boulton: It's like some of these small cars now. I wondered when I watched some of them pull up how the people were gonna get out of that thing. They kept gettin out and gettin out they must of had fifteen or twenty people in there. [Laugh]

Dodson: Well, what do you think about changes in the morality from the time that you first came to Southern California and now? Do you think there are any changes ?

Boulton: It's terrible now. Yes, it's been a definite change as far as I'm concerned.

Dodson: Can you tell us specifically what you think is a difference now over the way it was. Is there a diffference in the ways of looking at things, ways of life?

Boulton: Well, I think part of it is the way we look at

things, what you see and hear over the t.v. You know, that just gets me so. To us adults it's not going to bother us much but everytime I see a program like that I think about the little kids cause kids by the thousands we know are sitting in front of these things watching the various programs.

Dodson: You think the violent programs give them ideas and encourage crime?

Boulton: I certainly do. I think that's the beginning of alot of crime.

Dodson: How do you feel about crime in the Valley? Do you think it's less safe now then it was in the past?

Boulton: Well, I feel it is. I won't go out at night unless I absolutely have to go.

Dodson: When you first moved into the Valley did you walk freely at night when you wanted to?

Boulton: Yes. We didn't have any fear at all. It's just within the last few years that you've got this fear in your heart and are just afraid to go out unless you absolutley have to. I mentioned that to several people and I tell them I'm a coward and they say who isn't. They are too they say. And then one thing that had happened here doesn't help me any. We've had a robbery one time. My wife was in the hospital and I left here about two O'Clock one

afternoon to go to the hospital and we got back about four and when we got back about four he got out of the car and come through that door, it's hard to come through, but the fella that was in here he bolted it from the inside and of course while that was happening I went back to the garage and was getting out of the car and as I did that this fella inside he heard the noise and he come out through that back door boy, he was really traveling. I followed him up back to the garage and by the time I got back there he'd gone up over the fence into the neighbors yard. We've had several robberies up through this area in the last two or three years.

Dodson: Well you feel that is a definite change? That there is more crime then there was?

Boulton: I'm sure there is. When we first came here I don't remember hearing of those things at all really but you hear of it all the time now. Like I just said there's been four or five robberies on this street and the lady next door, her husbands sick and he's in the veterans hospital, and here about two months ago some young fella broke in the window in her bedroom and she heard the noise of course and she gets up and goes back to call us from the rear part of the house and to call the cops and to call her family and then after she's done that she started to come back toward her bedroom and ran into this fella in the living room. It was just a young kid, he had a big knife and he told her to open the front door he wanted to get out to his partner. She says "you open it,"

he said he couldn't and she didn't make any effort to open it for him and he finally got it open and went out. By that time the neighborhood had heard about it and they were out in front a lot of em, course I went to bed early that night and I was asleep when all this was happening and those things they just do something to ya.

Dodson: How do you feel about crime in the schools? This arson and breaking in, and vandalism, do you think there is more of that than when you first came to the Valley?

Boulton: I believe there's more course we've always had that since I've been acquainted with the schools. Now I'm sure it must, it just has to be worse that's all. More severe things are taking place than did years ago.

Dodson: Now, you'd be accquainted with that since y0u were working as a carpenter weren't you and repairing damage?

Boulton: Yes. Well, Mount Vernon Jr. High, you probably know that school or have heard of it, I got a call, guess on a monday morning, there had been some disturbance so I went out and found out that some boys in the neighborhood had gotten in the building and they went up on the second floor and turned on the fire hose and it ran until the neighbors across the street saw the water running out under the front door. It was my job to fix that up. They spent eleven

thousand dollars repairing that damage. That was going on frequently then and even more so now.

Dodson: What do you think causes the difference that you think there's more of that now then then?

Boulton: Well, that's kind of hard to sort out, what the difference is. That particular job, when they ran it down, and found out the guilty parties, one of em was a policeman's son. I think alot of those things, they're after money mainly. That's about it I think.

Dodson: Is there any other thing that you can think of under the general heading of changes in morality and so on. Between a period say thirty years ago and now?

Boulton: Course I think now, we happen to have so many things coming up that we didn't used to have. We didn't used to have all this dope and I think that's the main problem. Marijuana and stronger drugs, I think if we could get rid of those things our damage would drop considerably. And then of course unemployment is a problem. Young people especially would like to be earning some money.

Dodson: You think there's a greater pressure on young people to make money and that accounts for some of the changes that they try harder to get it?

Boulton: Money is partly responsible, yes. I feel sure that that is one of the reasons. Course, they'll

steal anything that's loose, some of em. Some things that aren't loose.

Dodson: Kathy, do you have anything you'd like to say along that line?

Kathy: No, I think it's been covered pretty well.

Dodson: Can you tell us anything about your recollection of uh, politics here in the Valley? Did anything make a special impression on you?

Boulton: No it hasn't. I tried to think quite a bit about that since I read that question here and as far as I can see there's very little difference if any.

Dodson: My associate here, Miss Burmiester, is something of a politician on campus. She's president of the Associated Women Students.

Boulton: Oh, how nice.

Kathy: I'm not a politician, I'm an idealist.

Dodson: Do you think that's what they all say?

Boulton: Well, some of these politicians say anything to gain a vote. [laughing]

Dodson: [laughing] Well, we trust Kathy isn't like that.

Boulton: No, I'm sure she isn't.

Dodson: Can you tell us anything about how living conditions and conveniences have changed since you first came out here?

Boulton: Well, there's been a great change for the better.

Dodson: You don't look back to the "good ol days" and think it was better then?

Boulton: Well, those were enjoyable times, especially as we were going through them but after having some of the newer experiences I wouldn't want to go back to the old. It's so much easier. You got mechanical things to work for you and all that sort of thing. Less drudgery.

Dodson: That's probably true. Do you think that we've lost something though and maybe people don't read as much or they don't go together to band concerts and that sort of thing that once existed, community things, all those sort of gone. Do you think it leaves a gap?

Boulton: I think there is a quilty party, it's time. We just seem to waste so much time.

Dodson: Mr. Boulton is pointing at his television set as he made those remarks.

Boulton: Well, like we said a little while ago, some of those programs that come over this thing, I just don't understand. The city, the state, some authority has to allow those things.

Dodson: You feel that television then is one of the things that has made a real difference between now and in the past?

Boulton: Yes, very definitly so. When I was a kid, course that's been some time ago, you had to make your own entertainment. I know when I was a kid I spent a lot of time playing "blacksmith." I set me up a blacksmith shop out in the fence corner someplace. Boy, the fun I would have. Kids all over were doing it. It was the thing they wanted to do, the thing they were interested in.

Dodson: I'm afraid they wouldn't know how to play it nowadays. A blacksmith. [laughs]

Boulton: Course I didn't know much about it but I had alot of fun.

Dodson: But in general you feel the technological advances are good rather than bad?

Boulton: Oh yes!

Dodson: What do you regard, Mr. Boulton, as the most important event in Valley history since you've lived in this area?

Boulton: Well, I would say bringing the water into the Valley. I don't recall what year that took place. If they hadn't brought in the water we wouldn't be in the position we are now, that's for sure. The water thats used in this valley is emmense. That's the outstanding thing about it.

Dodson: I think that's probably true. I imagine that most people would mention that as the most important thing in the history of the Valley.

Otherwise it couldn't have taken on the big population that it has now.

Boulton: No. We're still growing. I think we're reaching close to two million or more and speaking of the water, Mulholland was the engineer that helped bring that into the Valley.

Dodson: Do you remember the great flood that happened when his dam broke in San Francisqito canyon?

Boulton: Yes, yes. Yes I remember that and some time after that my wife and I we drove up through that area. It must have been a terrible thing to witness. The chunks of concrete we saw you'd think would be just unbelievable to move by water. It was just terrible.

Dodson: Was the dam completely demolished?

Boulton: Yes. When we saw it, I didn't see it until a little while after it happend, it was out entirely.

Dodson: When you visited the area of the dam breaking, how long was that after the dam actually burst, do you recall?

Boulton: Well, I would imagine a couple of years anyway.

Dodson: I was just wondering what the canyon looked like. Had it uprooted trees and scouped out dirt and that sort of thing?

Boulton: It looked kinda windswept, everything was gone.

Dodson: That particular dam was never rebuilt was it?

Boulton: No. It was never built again.

Dodson: I don't believe there is a dam in that canyon now is there?

Boulton: Uh, I don't think so. I don't believe there is.

Dodson: Do you recall what effect that had on Mr. Mulholland's reputation as an engineer?

Boulton: Well, I don't remember too much about it. I think some people blamed him for it. I heard them say that the anchorage at each end of the dam was poor anchorage. The soil wasn't suitable enough. They claimed that's why it broke loose.

Dodson: I see. Did it break loose only on the ends first, or do you recall?

Boulton: Well, I don't recall except to say that the way the people talked about it, I think that was the feeling they had.

Dodson: Well, I'm wondering Mr. Boulton if there was anything in the history of the Valley that you especially remember that gave you some satisfaction or happiness?

Boulton: I think I'd have to say the climatic conditions for one thing. Let's see what else I put down for that question. Oh. Yeah. Climatic conditions and there's just so many, many things. There's my wifes passing. It was a sad loss. That's about it I think.

Dodson: Did you feel that our climate here in the Valley was superior to where you lived in the city of Los Angeles first?

Boulton: Yes, for me I would. We lived in Sautell or West L.A. at one time. While the climate there is pretty good you never could sit out on an afteroon the ocean breeze was too cold. Here you don't have that course it's extreme but you can sit in the shade. I was so amazed when I first came to California, I'd be out on a job and I'd just be smothered with the heat and you get in the shadow of a [. . ?..] or anything and there would be so much difference in the temperature. I didn't understand it at first.

Dodson: Do you remember us ever having a snow storm in Van Nuys?

Boulton: Yes. In 1949 it snowed two nights. No I searched everywhere I knew to look for a picture I have of that,yesterday. It snowed two nights in succession and we had about four inches of snow and this valley was just gorgeous. It was all white.

Kathy: Did you build a snowman?

Boulton: No. [Laughs] The foothills were all covered here you know. The floor of the valley was white and looked so clean. I took pictures of it and I took some pictures down to the office and it amazed several of the girls. They wanted to get some postcards with that scene on it. So I took the film I had down to em and they made some pictures out of it.

Dodson: Did it create any particular problem such as traffic problems?

Boulton: I don't remember that it did but of course it could have. There was enough snow, four inches, you get that on the highway and it certainly be slipery.

Dodson: Well, what I was thinking is that people here wouldn't be equiped for that. They wouldn't have chains or snow tires or that sort of thing and I wondered if it created a hazard?

Boulton: I don't remember hearing that but I could see how it would. I remember when we used to go over the ridge route in the winter we'd always have chains. They would certainly need it in a condition like we had in '49.

Dodson: Yes, I know that road was quite different in '49 than it is now. We hear so much about minorities and minority rights and civil rights, do you remember anything along that line in the early days?

Boulton: I don"t remember.

Dodson: That's just something new as far as the Valley is concerned then?

Boulton: Yes. Cause as far as I'm personally concerned, I just didn't hear it.

Dodson: Did you happen to know personally any of the pioneers or thier desendants here?

Boulton: No, I didn't. We had some people in our church that could be considered in that group I think but they're all gone now.

Dodson: I think the uh, some members of the Lankershim family still owned thier ranch when you came didn't they? Maybe not after you moved into the Valley though, that could have been when you were living in Los Angeles.

Boulton: I don't remember hearing about it.

Dodson: Did you tell us anything about the important historic sites or buildings or anything like that in the Valley? Things that you think our museum might be interested in?

Boulton: Well, the thing that comes to mind is the San Fernando mission. I think that would be quite outstanding. It is quite outstanding. I've seen several others mentioned here that I really hadn't known about except the one in Encino. I used to see that building by just driving up Venturea Boulevard and the time I was doing all this I didn't realize its importance.

Dodson: You know thats frequently been true. Some time things are destroyed or torn down because people don't realize at the time that they are important.

Boulton: I saw it many times, any time I went out Ventura beyond Encino I saw that little building.

Kathy: [voice is inaudible]

Dodson: That's on Moorpark street isn't it, or is it on Ventura?

Boulton: No. It's back, oh a couple hundred feet I guess from Ventura. You know, I never took the trouble to drive down in there.

Dodson: Is that right. You know I've been surprized how many people who live here in the Valley are not acquainted with the historic objects in the Valley.

Boulton: Yeah well, when I got this map out yesterday I was surprized at all these historic spots that they're mentioning there and showing pictures of. It's quite interesting but I don't know much about it.

Dodson: Well, I'm wondering if you can think of some things that you feel should be recorded that we haven't asked about at all?

Boulton: Well I've given that a little thought actually. Looking through here, these papers here, and uh, I didn't come up with anything. I don't

believe I can offer you anything on that.

Dodson: I see. Uh, sometimes we put down things that we think are significant then someone will think of something that we didn't have at all that they think it quite important or that casts some kind of light on Valley happenings.

Boulton: Course I more or less mentioned this, Since we've been in the Valley I mentioned to you about the dairy, we had eleven hundred acres of a dairy there and now it's all Panorama City. And uh, Broadway and other big department stores, all thats been built since that time. Since we've been here in the Valley. It's just amazing when you stop and think about it a little bit. We got some wonderful stores up here, big stores, big department stores and groceries. I know just about everything the city has.

Dodson: I imagine all the big stores have been built since you moved into the Valley.

Boulton: Yes, they have. I think Penny may be classed as a big store. They were here when we first come, but that's they only big store that I really remember, course there were alot of other smaller stores but Penny was here and I was home from work one day and it was raining and kind of flooding the streets. My wife wanted to go to the store for something so I took her up to Penny's and we couldn't park out in the street so we drove up on the sidewalk about as near to the entrance as we could and I let her get out there. [chuckles]

Otherwise she'd have to wade in water that was up over the curb.

Dodson: Have you ever had any flood conditions in the part of the Valley where you lived?

Boulton: No. [inaudible]

Dodson: I see. This is 15116 Runnymead isn't it?

Boulton: Yes.

Dodson: I think some parts of the Valley, further west, have had flood problems off and on.

Boulton: Well, yes theres some spots thats kinda low and they've had some problems. One of those problems has been, and I'm not too sure what our storm drain situation is yet, but for years we didn't have any storm sewers everything had to run over the surface. That's one reason why we flooded several times. We used to go up and down Van Nuys during a storm and see lots of sandbags laying in front of the stores to keep the water from running in.

Dodson: That was on Van Nuys Boulevard?

Boulton: Yep. Yes, it was. Then, this valley used to be terribly windy. Course we have spells now but they were pretty strong then. I remember I was working out at Canoga Park one time and my boss came out to see me. He had a touring car at the time and he said, "my the wind was certainly blowing out on Van Nuys. I had to let the top down on my car I was afraid

it would blow me over." [chuckles] But uh, I think thats less than some. We don't have as much of it as we used to have.

Dodson: So you think the construction of storm sewers to a considerable extent took care of the problem. The winds just aren't blowing as strongly.

Boulton: Then, of course, they've got some open drains. Paved drains you know. That helps a lot too. I talked to our engineer down at the board about the storm situation and he says, "you know you can't control all the floods with storm drains.You're gonna have to have a certain amount run over the surface cause it would just be such a huge undertaking to get storm sewers enough and big enough to carry the amount of water that is coming through." Then, where we go to church, I remember, they used to have a foot bridge across the street there and one time we thought we'd have to have to go over the foot bridge to get to church.

Dodson: So that would be one change in the Valley then, the fact that you don't excessive water now and once you did.

Boulton: Yes we did. No we don't have as much as we used to, at least it's under control. There's not as much generally but we've got it controlled pretty well.

Dodson: I see. Kathy do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

Kathy: Uh, no. I think the professor's doing a very good job with this interview.

Dodson: Thank you.

Boulton: It's been nice meeting you folks and talkin with you.

Dodson: Well, we certainly appreciate being allowed to come here Mr. Boulton. It's been a pleasure to us. Uh, we've looked forward to this interview and we were glad that you could see us. Even if this is April 13th, 1976, it certainly hasn't brought us bad luck.

Boulton: Well, [response inaudible] When I was still back in Ohio I belonged to the junior order or United American Mechanics [inaudible] on the way home he grabbed my arm and started to run and said, "come on, come on." I said, "what's wrong?" He said, "Did you see that black cat cross in front of us there?" [laugh] So we had to run that black cat off.

Dodson: Do you think people are less superstitious now than they used to be [chuckle] or do you think it's the other way around?

Boulton: I think it must be less.

Dodson: Well, on that note I think we'll end this particular interview and we are very grateful to you for the contributions you've made.

Boulton: Oh, thank you so much. I was just wondering what I was gonna say that would be of some benefit to you but what I did I was glad to do.

Dodson: Well, thank you.

You have been listening to an interview with Mr. Clarence M. Boulton. The interview was held at his home on April 13, 1976. The interview was conducted by Dr. James L. Dodson, currator of the Los Angeles Valley College Historical Museum, and Miss Katherine Burmiester, museum aide.